



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE

Humanities

OFFICE OF CHALLENGE GRANTS

HUMANITIES ACCESS GRANTS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The guidelines say that funding is available for existing programs. How do you define an existing program or project?

The program or project must have a proven and successful track record of engaging youth, communities of color, or economically disadvantaged populations for at least one year or one program cycle.

We are an arts organization, are we eligible to apply?

Any U.S. nonprofit institution (public agency, private nonprofit organization, federally recognized Indian tribal government) working wholly or in part with the humanities may apply for a Humanities Access grant. The program or project that you would like to support through this grant must be a humanities project. Please refer to the Humanities Access grant guidelines (which are available on the [program resource page](#)) and consult the definition of the humanities found on page 2.

What do you mean by a “term endowment?”

A term endowment is a restricted fund that benefits a specific program. The fund’s invested monies are spent in their entirety—both the principal and the interest—over a set time period.

What are matching and spending periods for a Humanities Access Grant?

The grant period encompasses a total of five years. The first two years are fundraising years and are intended to build up the term endowment fund. During this time an organization should sustain its program using non-NEH, non-matching funds.

The following three years are spending years, in which an organization spends both the principal and the interest of the term endowment. This phased approach jumpstarts and encourages focused fundraising and capacity building for an organization’s most successful programs.

When can my organization start fundraising?

Fundraising for NEH's Humanities Access grants may begin in May of 2016—at the time an organization applies, in anticipation of a possible award.

When do we start our three years of spend down?

Should an organization receive a Humanities Access grant, the spend-down phase would begin after the second year of match funding has been released, approximately June 1, 2018.

What happens if you don't meet the match requirement?

Humanities Access matching dollars are provided on a one-to-one basis. There will be no extensions, and organizations may not recover lost match from the first year in the second year.

For example, if in the first year an organization raises only \$15,000 of its \$25,000 goal, NEH will provide only \$15,000 in match. If the organization raises only \$20,000 of the \$25,000 goal in the second year, NEH will provide only \$20,000. Given this scenario, the total term endowment raised would come to \$70,000 rather than the anticipated \$100,000. With this reduced amount, the organization would be required to submit a revised budget and scope for review and approval by NEH prior to beginning the spend-down period.

What happens if we meet all the fundraising goals in the first year or early?

Congratulations on your fundraising success! NEH will, however, match only up to \$25,000 or \$50,000 (depending on the level of funding you have chosen for the budget) per year. NEH is not able to "speed up" its funding schedule. If an organization is successful at raising funds more quickly or in excess of any annual match, it may use these monies to further enhance the program during the spend-down phase in the final three years of the grant—or to begin a permanent endowment.

Does NEH provide guidance for investment plans?

NEH does not provide guidance for investment plans. All applications to the Humanities Access Grants program must provide a plan for investing the funds over the grant period. Some nonprofit institutions have investment plan policies and should include these in the application narrative. If an organization does not have such policies, it should seek guidance and assistance from its board or financial advisors to develop an investment plan.

Is re-granting allowed?

Humanities Access grants do not support re-granting.

What types of donations count as match?

The Humanities Access grant requires a cash match raised from third parties. Some examples of third parties are individuals, state or local governments, corporations, and foundations. Funds from other federal entities are not allowed as match.

Where can I find information on the eligibility and certification of gifts raised to match the federal offer of a Humanities Access Grant?

[Federal Matching Funds Guidelines](#) govern the eligibility of gifts raised to match the federal Humanities Access Grant offer, as well as accounting for and certifying gifts.